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ABSTRACT

This journal theme issue focuses on mainstreaming of gifted children. "How Gifted Kids Can Survive in 'Inclusion' Classrooms" by Susan Winebrenner offers guidelines for compacting and differentiating the curriculum for gifted students within the regular classroom setting. It also addresses guiding independent study. "Challenging Ben" by Barbara Gilman and Linda Greene recounts one child's individualized programming including ability identification, classroom modifications, and issues of course and grade acceleration. "Hidden Gifted Learner: Creativity and Attention Deficit Disorder" by Deidre V. Lovecky summarizes characteristics of gifted students with ADD and stresses the importance of using students' creative strengths. "Instructional Perspectives: Mainstreaming and the Gifted Child" by Shirley W. Schiever questions whether the regular class setting is, in fact, the least restrictive environment for gifted students. Regular columns review children's books and address the issues of school choice, and picture books as art museums. (DB)

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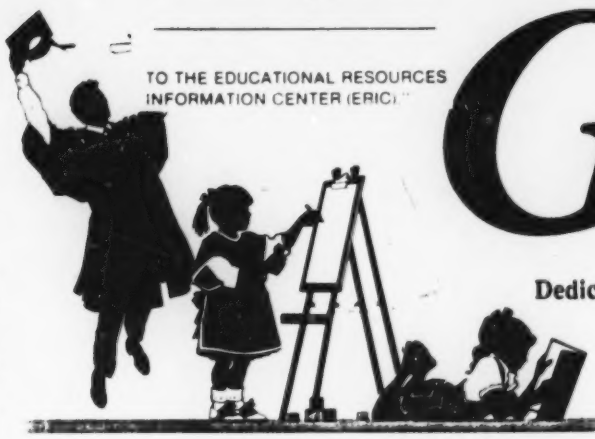

UNDERSTANDING OUR GIFTED®

Dedicated to helping gifted children reach their full potential

July-August, 1994

Volume 6, Issue 6

How Gifted Kids Can Survive in "Inclusion" Classrooms

Susan Winebrenner, M.S.

The term "gifted" has become politically incorrect. Programs for gifted students are being cut back or eliminated outright. The greatest perceived need in education is to "restructure" schools so "equity" can be achieved by creating conditions in which "all students can learn." Educational programs that include ability grouping are expected to restructure by placing all students in totally mixed-ability classrooms, since historically, those placed in lower-ability groups have not made as much learning progress as those placed in higher ability groups. Since the assumption in all this rhetoric is that gifted students are already learning, they find themselves at the bottom of the needs continuum, appearing to be doing just fine without any special intervention. Teachers, who are desperately trying to empower former special education students to learn, are unlikely to perceive that gifted students have any pressing needs when they may be getting their work done and earning high grades.

Since the term "gifted" evokes so much negative response in an egalitarian political climate, the first step in creating a more positive attitude toward the

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MAINSTREAMING THE GIFTED

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Challenging Ben

Barbara Gilman, M.S., and Linda Greene, M.A.

This article represents a collaborative effort by a specialist in assessment and a second grade public school teacher. Bobbie addresses identification, growth commensurate with ability, and long-term placement issues, while Lin views programming "through a teacher's eyes."

With the current emphasis on the heterogeneous grouping of students in public schools and the concurrent reduction of gifted programs, meeting the needs of gifted students is an increasing challenge. Districts often propose to meet these needs by the "individualization" or "personalization" of curriculum within the regular classroom. Unfortunately, recent studies indicate that this occurs only rarely. "The Classroom Practices Observation Study" (Westburg, Archambault, Dobyns & Salvin, 1993) found no instructional or curricular differentiation in 84% of the instructional activities in which these students participated. Appropriate modification depends upon the teacher's recognition of the student's need, understanding of the approaches successful with gifted students, and

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FROM THE EDITOR

Do you think the editors of *Time* read *Understanding Our Gifted?* Their July 18th cover story was Attention Deficit Disorder, the same topic we featured in May/June. Obviously the subject of ADD/ADHD, so relevant to gifted education, has wide appeal.

This issue of our journal explores "Mainstreaming the Gifted," another critical theme affecting students and teachers as they return to their classrooms this fall. Susan Winebrenner discusses methods for mixed-ability classes; Bobbie Gilman and Lin Greene describe the challenge of a highly gifted child from both consultant's and teacher's perspectives; and our regular columnists present some diverse views.

Check out our expanded editorial advisory board. We're proud to be associated with such expertise.

We value your letters, calls and faxes. Keep them coming!

Dorothy Knopper

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Deirdre V. Lovecky

HIDDEN GIFTED LEARNER

Creativity and Attention Deficit Disorder

Until recently the focus on children with attention deficit disorder (ADD/ADHD) has highlighted behavioral, social and emotional difficulties with rare mention of any strengths. Nevertheless, when strengths are mentioned, creativity is described as a special strength of people with ADD/ADHD (Hallowell & Ratey, 1994; Kelly & Ramundo, 1993; Lovecky, 1994).

In my study of 70 gifted children with ADD/ADHD (Lovecky, 1994), the vast majority exhibited creativity, even youngsters who showed considerable hyperactivity and learning disabilities. What they had more difficulty with was organizing their creative ideas into products, and sustaining enough interest and motivation to finish a project once they had gotten past the novelty of the initial idea.

Hallowell and Ratey (1994) suggested that several elements of the ADD/ADHD mind actually favor the development of creativity. Having greater than average tolerance for chaos fosters creativity because the person can bear the tension of facing the unknown, in order to see something new; also one does not immediately put new sensations and images into a proper place in the mind. There is no proper place, so images are placed alongside other images in unusual patterns that lead to new ways of seeing things, and new ideas.

Impulsivity can be used to do something new. The actual creative impulse comes from nowhere, as does the impulsive action. Being tuned into acting on impulses, thoughts and feelings tends to foster greater creativity.

The ability to intensely focus attention at times is an important and often overlooked aspect of ADD/ADHD. The intense focus, and immersion into the subject matter at hand, can produce impressive results, and also breaks down rigid barriers in the mind as the material is absorbed.

Finally, Hallowell and Ratey mention hyperreactivity of the ADD/ADHD mind. By this they mean that the person is always reacting, moving around ideas, so that new connections are likely to form.

In my work with ADD/ADHD gifted children, I have noted other aspects that foster creativity. Many of these children have trouble getting to the point. They do not organize material in commonly accepted schema, such as sequentially; instead, they associate loosely to questions asked and tend to go off on tangents. These tangents can produce interesting ways of looking at material. Often these children are the most difficult to assess, as many of their answers do not match any responses given in the test manuals yet are very high-level responses.

Children with ADD/ADHD have a high need for stimulation and will stimulate their minds with a constant stream of fact and fantasy. The elaborate intertwining of fantasy material into real life enables them to see new patterns. This is especially true of children who write, compose or draw. Often they report they dream all the time when asleep and daydream much of the time they are awake. In fact, fantasy can intrude to the point that they are not quite sure whether or not things are real, partly because they are also apt to question how we know what we know and what makes things real or not. In addition, they often have hyperactive minds that never stop thinking, even when they are asleep. Part of the reason such minds are creative is that they simply generate more ideas than most people. While many of these ideas may be foolish, the sheer volume also produces some valuable ideas.

Finally, many are distractible. This means they tend not to pay attention to things everyone else notices, but instead to focus intensely on things no one else sees. This can lead to noticing small details or to reversing figure-ground. Thus, they will look at the pattern of light between the leaves and branches of a tree, or the shape of shadows on a wall or listen to the spaces between notes in a melody. This disrupts attention to the larger pattern but produces new images and ideas.

In working with gifted children with ADD/ADHD, it is vitally important to use their creative strengths rather than focusing only on weaknesses. Using creativity enhances learning since they are using familiar style. Also, more focus on creativity can help them overcome weaknesses by finding ways of compensating directly and by learning creative problem-solving techniques. A multi-modal approach combining remediation of some weaknesses and productive

(Continued on page 18)

THE BLESSING
To Joshua

By Barbara Mullins

You are blessed
inquisitive, bright eyed
engaged and in motion
curious
connecting
thinking
a bright star shining more brightly
than any night sky has seen

Challenging
asking profound questions
always too soon
catching me off guard
in errors and unprepared
seeking truth
as if you have always known

But will you be loved
when your brightness shines
illuminating the darkness?
when your questions tire
those not seeking the truth?
When your persistence exhausts
your teachers,
your friends?

Will you be loved when your
brilliance
frightens
those who cannot keep pace?
who cannot fathom needing to know
all
they never thought to ask

Will you wither
over time
wounded, unnourished
unchallenged
fettered
to timelines and years

Can I carry you
between childhood
and the choices
the gift can give

Will I let you be
as you are
unlike others:
complacent
conforming

Will you be shunned
desiring, hungering for closeness
intimacy
you never imagined
only few can give

How will you seem to others
will your mountains
be only pillows
your castles, only chairs
never seeing the gossamer
wings
in the air
all around you

Exhausted in reaching you
a tireless wonder
filled with promise
of the gift you hold
in open hands offering it
to me
your gift of the blessing

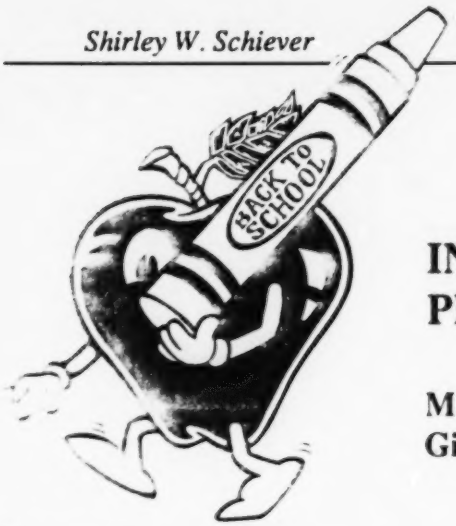
It has carried me over times
when I've wondered
who is the teacher
who is the student
for you have shown me God
by your faith
shown me grace
by your forgiveness
shown me trust
by your humility
shown me honor
by your commitment
steadfast in your love

How can I help you
will I find those
who will travel
on this journey
who will explore
without boundaries
the questions you ask
who will love you
in spite of
because of
the peace
you fail to bring

I pray together
for grace
for hands we will
reach
one by one
to ours
celebrating
the gift
the challenge
the intensity
the brightness with which you shine
amidst the night

Barbara Mullins, M.S.Ed., is an education manager in St. Charles, Illinois, and the mother of two gifted children.

Shirley W. Schiever



INSTRUCTIONAL PERSPECTIVES

Mainstreaming and the Gifted Child

The concept of mainstreaming was developed for the benefit of children with handicapping conditions. Its purposes are to (a) provide models for appropriate behavior, (b) offer educational experiences that are challenging and stimulating, and (c) educate the child in the least restrictive environment. In this article I will examine those purposes in relation to gifted children; I propose to demonstrate how ludicrous is the mainstreaming of gifted children for academic classes.

What models of behavior do gifted children see when they observe their age peers in an academic class? Generally speaking, they see that knowledge and intellect are not valued; knowing and, worse, *questioning* ideas makes one a nerd. Not paying attention to instruction or completing assignments is acceptable to their peers, while completing schoolwork or enjoying learning makes one a "geek." Mainstreaming can encourage gifted children to hide their giftedness as they observe and emulate such behaviors.

By definition, the mainstream classroom is not designed to provide challenge or stimulation for gifted children. Expecting a handicapped child to learn as quickly as mainstream students is considered not only educationally unsound, but downright mean. However, asking gifted children to slow down and, indeed, at times to cease their learning is seen as a natural course of events. If we applied the same principle to sports, we would require the fleet of foot to wear weights, so they could not go faster than the average runner.

In education, the least restrictive environment is one that offers the fewest restraints on learning, one that does not inhibit intellectual or academic development. For gifted students, the least restrictive environment is one in which ideas are valued, depth of exploration and knowing are encouraged, and the content and pace of learning allows progress as dictated by ability and desire. The sports analogy is again useful to examine this idea. Coaches are allowed and expected to select those athletes with the most talent and abilities and to offer them special training to further develop such talents and abilities. No apologies are made to those who don't make the varsity team. No one spends undue amounts of time worrying about the children who are not as athletically adept, who see selected individuals given recognition, special training, and small-group instruction to increase their skills. Why is this so different from offering an appropriate curriculum and environment to intellectually gifted students?

When discussing mainstreaming for the gifted, I suggest we use the purposes or goals of mainstreaming to develop our response. Role models for bright children include practicing professionals engaged in solving significant and substantive problems. Mentors and guest speakers can fulfill this need. Models for challenging and stimulating curriculum within an appropriate environment are available, as is teacher training to implement the models. The least restrictive environment for gifted students is one that allows their full, holistic development—intellectual, moral, social, and academic. To achieve the goals of mainstreaming for gifted students, sound educational practices based on the learning needs of this population must be implemented. Anything less is unequal and unfair.

Shirley W. Schiever, Ph.D., is a curriculum specialist at the Fine Arts Magnet School in Tucson, Arizona, and the author of ***A Comprehensive Approach to Teaching Thinking***.

Stephanie S. Tolan

THE READING ROOM

Last time we looked at science fiction writer Orson Scott Card's "Ender" trilogy, *Ender's Game, Speaker for the Dead* and *Xenocide*. Those three books are readily recognizable "plastic and metal" sci-fi; they take place in the future and involve space travel. Card's "Alvin Maker" trilogy (*Seventh Son, Red Prophet* and *Prentice Alvin*) is a little harder to categorize.

It appears to take place on earth, on the North American continent, a little over 200 years ago. Though the spellings are often odd, readers recognize names (Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, Ta-Kumsah) and places (The Wobbish, Tippy-canoe and Hio Rivers). One important character, the itinerant story-teller, occasional poet and would-be prophet called Taleswapper, is really, we are told, William Blake. William Henry Harrison is a major villain. Napoleon and Lafayette play important roles in the final volume.

Perhaps it is the concept of parallel universes that accounts for the similarities, however, because in spite of those similarities these books most definitely do not take place in 18th-century America. Part of the lure is the tantalizing likeness that leads the reader to wonder what America's present would be like if the past had been as Card creates it here.

In *Seventh Son*, Card quickly establishes the main difference between this world and ours and gives us Alvin, the main character. Alvin is born into a world in which magic works, where people have "knacks," psychic abilities of varying sorts--*dowsers* who can find water, *sparks* who can start fires, *torches* who can look into a person's "heart fire" and see the many possible paths of the future. But the person with the greatest power is the seventh son of a seventh son. Alvin is such a child, born in a flood as his family is moving west, and the main business of the trilogy is to see whether Alvin is strong enough to live up to his gifts.

Seventh Son provides the story of Alvin's childhood and is filled with large issues and concepts (as is typical of Card's work). There are conflicts among white settlers (e.g., traditional religion vs. the folk magic of hexes and knacks) between whites and reds (a desire to subdue the earth and other people vs. a need to live in harmony with natural rhythms) and, as in any novel, between people. The central narrative question (the foundation of all three books) is whether Alvin can discover his knack and learn to use it before he is overcome by his enemy, "the unmaker" (the devil? entropy?).

In the second book, *The Red Prophet*, the focus is on the Indians, their warrior-leader Ta-Kumsa and his brother, the ex-drunk now pacifist spiritual leader, Tenska-Tawa, and how the conflict between Indians and settlers can be handled. Alvin learns that his gift for "making" and his life vision, are entwined with the future of the red people.

In the final book, *Prentice Alvin*, Alvin grows to adulthood, and the central conflicts between people widen to include the future of black slaves.

As ever Card, himself a Mormon, treats spiritual and religious matters with respect, passion and fairness, giving the reader much to ponder. One of the central questions the books address is whether the life energy of earth is lost when humans subjugate nature, animals and other humans to their individual will. The wonderfully told, exciting and suspenseful story will lure bright young readers on; the intellectual issues will nourish their need to address important issues, think deep thoughts and come to their own conclusions.

Stephanie Tolan, from Columbus, Ohio, is a noted author of children's books and one of the authors of the award-winning book, ***Guiding the Gifted Child.***

Jim Delisle

KALEIDOSCOPE

Schools of Choice: Decisions, Decisions

Except for preschool and college, parents and children seldom have choices as to what public schools students will attend. In rural areas, there may be no choice at all, as the only alternative to the single public school in the vicinity may be home schooling. In small cities and suburbs, "neighborhood schools" are often still in vogue; you attend the school closest to your front door. Urban areas may offer magnet schools, neighborhood schools, or all manner of other awkward combinations to comply with federal rules on desegregation or equity.

Suffice it to say there is no agreed upon method of school management. In fact, it has been only recently that the issue of "who goes where" in our public schools has garnered any real interest at all.

Now, an enterprising idea called "Schools of Choice" has taken hold in some regions of the country. Although its exact operation differs from place to place, the idea behind schools of choice is often the same: individual schools or school districts will "compete" for students, enticing students to attend their institution because it is better than any other one around.

Sounds great, huh? Teachers and administrators will package a curriculum that caters to the needs of every child; they will upgrade both instructional skills and equipment to "meet the challenges of the next century" (a common advertising slogan in school choice literature); they will promise you the world, educationally speaking, in exchange for your child and the state subsidy that accompanies him or her to school. In such a businesslike environment, only the strongest will survive, leaving less competitive schools with few students and little reason to exist.

. . . Therein lies the problem. For as surely as you will find schools of choice that work for the students within their walls, you will locate another school—perhaps as close as just down the street—where resources limit the ability to compete for students. Thus, as more and more students flock to the "good" school, the other schools are left behind with fewer students and, ultimately, even more meager resources than they had before. Unlike business, though, these schools won't close up shop, they will merely languish, creating a pool of "have nots" where no one—parents, kids, educators—expects very much.

Instead of having schools *of* choice, I would like to consider schools *with* choice. The difference between the two is more a philosophical one than anything else; it implies that in order to improve education, you work *within* the school for positive change instead of pulling your kids from their friends and neighbors to go shopping elsewhere for a finer curriculum.

Working together as teams, parents, educators, and community leaders *whose only agenda is excellence* plan educational options that challenge both the most and least able students under their roof. If financial resources are limited—they usually are—consider ways to tap the talents of community members or the coffers of in-town businesses; for until and unless the local community adopts education as a priority for *all* its members to support, there is little hope for anything better than haphazard improvement.

As far as I know, kids are not commodities to be bought and sold like so many shares of IBM stock. Futures trading is fine, but it should be limited to pork bellies and oil reserves, not the lives of our nation's students. If we are to "take stock" in anything, let it be in the improvement of *every* school, not just the select few that schools of choice advocates prefer to highlight.

Jim Delisle, Ph.D., is on the faculty of education at Kent State University and is a 5th-6th grade consulting teacher in Solon, Ohio. The author of five books, Jim is currently working on a new edition of *The Gifted Kids Survival Guide* (with Judy Galbraith).

exceptional learning needs of this group of students may be to eliminate the term altogether. I am suggesting a new category for all students who need a "differentiated" program in the classroom. *DILFAPS* is an acronym for those who are *Discrepant In Learning From Age PeerS*, including all students for whom the regular curriculum, teaching methods or pacing are not appropriate. All *DILFAPS* need different pacing or complexity, and have learning styles that require atypical teaching methods.

Classroom teachers need to be made aware that in a typical mixed-ability classroom, those students who are at greatest risk of learning the *least* are those who already either knew much of the content or could learn even new material in a much shorter time than the other students in the class. As Sylvia Rimm (1986) has pointed out, when learners are denied regular experience with challenging learning, their self-esteem may suffer. The surest path to high self-esteem is to be successful at something the learner has perceived to be difficult. Each time we *steal* a student's *struggle*, we steal the opportunity for him or her to feel capable by stretching to reach worthwhile goals. Our mission is to help teachers understand that all their students, including the most capable in any class, have a right to experience the challenge of learning.

Teachers may not be afraid to find out what highly capable students already know. However, teachers are concerned about what they will have to provide for these kids when what they have planned for the rest of the class is inappropriate. They may predict that they will become entrapped in a situation that will cause them to spend many extra hours planning for this small group of learners. Since today's teachers are already overwhelmed trying to meet the educational, psychological, and social needs of kids with so many learning problems, the prospect of creating more work for themselves is understandably not very appealing. The secret is to help teachers learn how to offer and manage alternate learning experiences for gifted DILFAPS in easily manageable ways that do not create animosity from other students or parents. Guidelines for utilizing several appropriate educational strategies for gifted students are the focus of this article.

Compacting and Differentiating

The first step in providing an appropriate curriculum for gifted students is to eliminate the concept of extra credit. Gifted kids soon learn that if more work is their "prize" for finishing the regular work quickly, they better slow down. Rather than something extra, consider instead a variety of alternate, enriched, or extended learning opportunities. As a regular part of curriculum planning, teachers can incorporate more appropriately challenging activities all students may eventually experience, but which the most capable students should do *instead of* the age-appropriate activities.

Three strategies will be described that teachers can use to provide challenging learning opportunities for gifted students: compacting, differentiating and independent study. *Compacting* allows students who demonstrate previous mastery of certain material to spend less time with the regular curriculum and more time with extension and enrichment opportunities. *Differentiation* makes available learning activities that extend the regular curriculum. *Independent study* allows students to explore a topic of passionate interest, whether or not it is included in the regular curriculum.

A caution to parents seems in order here. If teachers adapt the regular curriculum to provide appropriate challenge for your children, they need parental support in helping the youngsters appreciate how learning to struggle will help them experience the true joys of learning in meaningful and interesting ways. A temporary drop in grades during the "struggle" portion of the learning experience should not result in panic or complaints from students or their parents about perfect grade records being ruined. The most important thing your son or daughter needs to learn in school is *how to learn*! If your child goes off to college without having learned that she is still a worthwhile person even if she has to struggle to learn, she might not know how to deal with the frustration she is sure to encounter in college classes.

Guidelines for compacting and differentiating in pre-testable subject areas

1. Always provide opportunities at the beginning of a unit of study for volunteers to take a pre-test or other type of assessment activity. This might be the same tool that will be used for diagnosing what all students have learned at the conclusion of the chapter or unit.

2. Students who demonstrate mastery are required to work with the large group only when the teacher is teaching concepts they have not mastered. When the class is working on concepts the student has mastered, the student works on alternate activities. Prepare a contract indicating the lessons or activities during which students work with the teacher and the class.

3. Create a choice menu of alternate activities with which students can work on the days they are working more independently. One of the choices is always the "student's own idea". During enrichment times, students are required to follow three

rules in order to maintain their independent status.

- **Don't bother anyone**
- **Don't call attention to yourself**
- **Work on the alternate activities during the entire class period**

The "cost" of not following these rules is to return to work with the larger group for the duration of the unit of work. However, teachers are expected to provide the necessary assistance and instruction to make the alternate activities understandable to those working more independently and to inquire periodically if the child needs assistance.

4. Students' grades or assessment outcomes for this unit come only from demonstrating mastery of the same content as the rest of the class. The grades they earned on the pre-assessment activity for concepts they have already mastered are entered in the teacher's grade book each day the student follows the expected rules during independent work time.

Figure 1

CIVIL WAR STUDY GUIDE

Be prepared to:

1. Discuss the causes of the war.
2. Describe the basis of the economy for the North and the South.

★ **Quiz for 1 and 2 by January 19th** ★

3. Know the meaning of the vocabulary words listed on pages 89, 96, 104, and 115.
4. Complete a map of the states in 1861 to show which states seceded to the Confederacy and which stayed in the Union.
5. Recite from memory Lincoln's "Gettysburg Address."

★ **Quiz for 1-5 by February 1st** ★

6. Describe typical battle conditions which a soldier would be likely to encounter.
7. Narrate a 3-minute biographical sketch of any Civil War personality.

★ **Test for 1-7 by February 15th** ★

Guidelines for compacting and differentiating in areas where prior knowledge is not present

1. Even when gifted students do not know material the class will be studying, compacting is still required because these students need less time than their age peers to learn. For each unit, prepare a study guide such as the one shown in Figure 1 that includes the concepts for which all students in the class will be responsible. These concepts are listed in the order in which they will be taught, with checkpoint dates to indicate times when students are expected to demonstrate that they are keeping up with the study guide timetable.

2. When preparing the unit plan and study guide, make a list of related topics you would like to include if you had the time. At the end of the list of suggested topics, add one that asks students to propose their own ideas.

3. Invite students who have demonstrated in previous units that they are clearly learning faster and deeper than their classmates to choose the study guide format *instead of staying with the class* to learn the required content. These students are required to pay attention to the lesson only during the checkpoint times or when the class is doing extension activities which the teacher wants all students to attend. Students are expected to learn about one of the alternate topics, and their grade for that project replaces the grade they would have earned by doing the regular work the rest of the class is doing.

4. Students are allowed to choose the format they will use to express what they have learned about the alternate topic. Since these "specialists" are already working with more complex ideas, their grade or assessment outcome for their project is based on the level of thinking demonstrated in their research. Teachers are urged to avoid having students do written reports, since writing is tedious for some students whose minds are racing faster than their hands can keep up, and may be perceived as "more work" by the eligible students. An example of a reasonable expectation is for the student to present a 7-10 minute talk to the class accompanied by at least one visual aid. The student is asked to prepare one significant question which is presented to the audience both before and after the presentation to enhance the listeners' attentiveness.

5. Students who opt for the project alternative are expected to follow certain behavioral guidelines. An independent study contract allows the teacher to communicate the essential conditions of independent status, and makes it clear to the student that the price of independence is increased responsibility. Students initial each contingency as they agree to abide by it, and sign at the bottom to indicate acceptance of all the terms. Students who do not honor the terms of the contract return to work with the larger group.

Independent Study of a Student's Passion

Most exceptionally capable DILFAPS are intensely curious. They are interested in learning about a variety of topics. Teachers who are willing to allow such students to become involved in long-term independent studies find that the more absorbed these kids become in their topic, the less likely they are to ask the teacher the dreaded question, "I'm done....Now what should I do?" An easy-to-manage opportunity is for the student to become involved in an ongoing investigation that would lead to becoming a specialist or "resident expert" on a particular topic. When the student returns to the same topic of choice over an extended period of time, the teacher is relieved from making specific extension activities available. Of course, the teacher will want to plan several short conferences with specialists in order to monitor the student's progress and level of frustration or satisfaction.

1. Teachers provide a form such as the Topic Browsing Planner in Figure 2 for students to use for 10 school days to find the range of information available about their topics and to choose smaller suptopics on which to develop expertise.

2. When students have completed the Planner, they indicate their choice of specialty topics by working on a Resident Expert Planner. (See Figure 3).

3. Students in the primary grades may choose to represent what they've learned in a non-written form, such as creating pictures on blank transparency sheets and using the pictures to describe to the class what they have learned.

4. Students in the higher grades may investigate a topic of their choice and present the information to their classmates or other appropriate audiences in novel ways.

5. Students who are pressured into choosing topics prematurely may lose interest in completing the investigation. It is very important that enough time be allotted for students to explore the information available about specific topics before they are required to choose specific subtopics for more in-depth study.

6. Whether or not students ever complete their independent study is not cause for concern. There may be no more rewarding situation than when a student discovers a topic about which he or she wants to learn endlessly. Teachers simply expect a 10-minute progress report every two weeks so the student can share a part of learning

Figure 2

TOPIC BROWSING PLANNER

Student's name: _____ Date: _____

GENERAL TOPIC OF INTEREST: _____

SUBTOPICS I WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT (use the back for more ideas):

_____ _____

_____ _____

HOW I MIGHT COLLECT INFORMATION ABOUT THIS TOPIC:

INFORMATION SOURCES	CALL NUMBER, AUTHOR, OR DATE	TITLE	WHERE I FOUND IT
Books:			
Periodicals: (magazines, newspapers, etc.)			
Other Sources: (TV, radio, etc.)			

PROFESSIONALS WITH WHOM I MIGHT CONDUCT INTERVIEWS:

Name Profession Workplace

_____

_____

_____

EXPERIMENTS OR SURVEYS I MIGHT CONDUCT: _____

_____

_____

HOW I CAN SHARE WHAT I'VE LEARNED ABOUT ONE SUBTOPIC: _____

_____

_____

with classmates. The reports are often no more sophisticated than a talk accompanied by a visual aid.

Summary

In order for all highly capable students to learn effectively in mixed-ability classrooms, consistent compacting and differentiation of the regular curriculum should be part of the planning and teaching of all units of study. When teachers use methods like those described in this article, they discover that the techniques are highly motivating and useful for many other students besides the identified gifted students. The learning opportunities gifted students need in order to survive as highly motivated learners are totally compatible with emerging theory and practice on effective learning for all students. When teachers observe the exciting outcomes from the compacted and differentiated work of their most capable students, they are encouraged to improve the quality of learning for all their students. Thus, providing academic accommodations for gifted students has the potential to improve the learning experience for all students and set a good example for all teachers and schools to emulate.

Figure 3

UPPER GRADES RESIDENT EXPERT PLANNER

Student's name: _____ Date: _____

The Subtopic I Will Study from the Topic Browsing Planner:

_____

What I Want to Learn About: _____

_____

_____

_____

Sources of Information Used in My Study: _____

_____

_____

_____

The Most Interesting Information I Discovered: _____

_____

_____

_____

How I Will Share What I've Learned with an Audience: _____

_____

_____

_____

Date I Will Be Ready to Share Some Information: _____

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CHALLENGING BEN Continued from page 1

proficiency in handling the demands of classrooms with a greater range of abilities. Clearly, special needs students require more of the teacher's time in today's classroom, and teachers require strategies that are both time-saving and effective. This article addresses one child's individualized programming from the identification of his high abilities to the modifications his teacher used in the classroom. Issues of course and grade acceleration are addressed, as well as whether academic progress was commensurate with ability.

Identification

Ben was evaluated at the Gifted Development Center at the age of 6 years 1 month, using the *Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children-Revised* (WISC-R). At that time, he earned a Verbal IQ score of 145, a Performance IQ score of 138, and a Full Scale IQ score of 145, placing him in the highly gifted range of intellectual ability. Because Ben earned ceiling level scores on three subtests, it appeared that his ability

might exceed the range of the WISC-R and it was recommended that he be retested on the *Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scale* (Form L-M), which has a considerably higher ceiling. The Stanford-Binet was administered at age 7-5 and Ben attained a mental age of 14, beyond the norms in the manual. Using the formula in the manual, Ben's IQ score was estimated to be 192, well into the extraordinarily gifted (160+) range. According to the normal curve of distribution, an IQ score of 180 theoretically should occur once in every million individuals.

Ben was accepted into his school's TAG program on the basis of his private test scores. Subsequent testing at his school on the *Screening Assessment for Gifted Elementary Students-Primary Level* (SAGES) yielded a score of 133. A second group IQ test, the *Cognitive Abilities Test* (CogAT), was also administered and he earned a Verbal score of 134 and a Quantitative score of 138. Highly gifted children frequently earn significantly lower scores on group intelligence tests. The vast discrepancies between Ben's scores on the Binet and the CogAT underscore the need for individual testing. These children can provide multiple, complex answers on individually administered oral tests and often miss simpler, forced-choice questions they tend to make more complex (Pegnato & Birch, 1959). Many newer tests have lower ceilings (they have omitted questions only gifted students could answer) or deemphasize verbal abilities (Silverman, 1986), making assessment of the highly gifted difficult.

Individual achievement test scores at ages 6-1 and 7-9 on the *Peabody Individual Achievement Test-Revised* (PIAT-R) and the *Kaufman Test of Educational Achievement* (K-TEA) were at the ceiling level of the tests, confirming the considerably higher individual IQ scores. On the K-TEA, administered in the spring of second grade, Ben earned a Battery Composite score of 160 (highest possible score). Computed grade equivalents placed him at the 10th grade level in math, 8th grade level in reading, and the 5th grade level in spelling, creating a significant challenge for his teacher, Lin Greene. Not surprisingly, Ben had complained in the past of boredom in the classroom and of already knowing most of the material before it was taught. His parents were concerned that he was becoming lazy because expectations were too low.

Programming

As Ben's second-grade teacher, my plan for him started before we had ever met. I was aware that he had been identified for our Talented and Gifted Program (TAG) in first grade. This is unusual for a first grader at our school. I also knew that his parents had been disappointed with the opportunities presented Ben thus far.

Being a believer in goal setting for myself as well as my children, I set my personal goal to increase Ben's learning opportunities with individual programming that would be different, but not usually separate from his peers. I wanted to act as his mentor, guiding his choices and making sure that the challenge was always there. If I was unsuccessful, or Ben and his parents were unhappy, it was NOT going to be from my lack of planning or trying the unusual.

When I spoke with his parents in the opening weeks of school, I felt encouraged. They respected my knowledge and experience, and also heartily supported my more unusual ideas without an already set program of their own in mind. I felt unthreatened and appreciated—just what a teacher needs when embarking on the untried.

In the early months of school, a brief form was being prepared for use with TAG students that would serve as an individual education plan (IEP). I scheduled an appointment with Ben's parents to complete the form. Together, we devised a year-long plan, emphasizing modification in Ben's areas of strength and encouraging growth in his weaker areas. Ben was brought in for part of the half-hour meeting and each person provided valuable input. For example, Ben had completed a classroom exercise that included the question, "What subject is most difficult for you?" He had told his parents that he wrote, "Math," because he was afraid to admit that no subject was difficult for him.

We chose Math, Language Arts and Science to be our focus areas (see IEP form, p.13). Since "follow through" was indicated as a weaker area, part of my job would be to make the end result of each project something Ben really wanted to achieve.

Using informal assessment, i.e., listening to Ben read and questioning his comprehension of the text, I determined that fourth-grade level reading gave him an opportunity for growth and was still enjoyable. In spelling, I tested Ben using a 1000 word list drawn from sources of commonly misspelled words (Carroll, Davies & Richman, 1971; Jacobson, 1985). Starting with those Ben missed, we made up his individual spelling lists. Ben joined the class in their spelling activities, but used his own words which were mainly fourth grade and above.

I think it's important to note that his peers, who considered him "Mr. Answer Man," were involved in Ben's achievements. They came to realize that this year, Ben was working as hard as they were, just on other things. Without this realization, fostered by Ben's presentations to the class and his project updates, he would have

Individualized Education Plan (IEP)

NAME Ben

AGE 7

GRADE 2

TEACHER K. Greene

Strong Subject Area(s):	Student's Strength(s):
(✓) Math	(✓) Verbal
(✓) Language Arts	( ) Broad, intense interests
(✓) Science	(✓) Abstract thinking ability
( ) Social Studies/Geography	(✓) Creative
(✓) Reading	(✓) Rapid, efficient learner
( ) Spelling	( ) Intense concentration; long attention span; persistent at meaning-laden tasks
( ) Art	
( ) Music (instrumental)	
( ) Music (general)	( ) Less need for task structure
( ) Other _____	( ) Self-motivator

Subject area(s) chosen to provide advanced study: Math, Language Arts, Science

GOALS: ① To advance in Language Arts areas, especially as follow-through activities; i.e. shadowing a medical person with a log and presentation.
② To have Ben achieving at his level in Math
③ Encouragement Ben's Enthusiasm for Science and public speaking.

ACTIVITIES: ① Have TAG set up shadow experience. Teacher sees to follow-up
② Testing in Math with placement into a 3rd grade room for Math on a trial basis at first
③ Enter Ben into Science Fair
④ Enter Ben into the Toastmaster's Program

EVALUATION

Performance	Decisions
(✓) Objectives met as stated	(✓) Continue objectives Accelerate to 4th grade.
( ) Made progress	( ) Postpone
( ) No observable progress	( ) Discontinue objectives

eventually become isolated from his class.

Part of my job is to make everyone feel important, but not more important than anyone else. I used the following methods to insure that this also occurred with Ben. 1) As I asked various children to recap what was expected of them in their next assignment, Ben would also be asked to state aloud what he was asked to accomplish. This helped Ben's goal setting process, but also let his peers know that he was being asked to do his best, too. 2) When Ben and I would discuss the results of his oral presentation, I'd use the "teachable moment" to give him ideas of what he might still say to a particular child who had asked a question of him or had mentioned a personal insight during Ben's Q and A time. This provided Ben the words so that he could give compliments to the other children, making them feel important. Soon, Ben could see these opportunities himself, without me. 3) The children respected me and my total acceptance of Ben with his unique talents, because I also equally recognized their talents.

In Ben's case, my preventative methods worked. Ben didn't experience "backlash" from other children. There was no need to have class meetings or lunch sessions with cliques of children. In the past, I have found these methods very helpful, especially when repeated at infrequent intervals.

Ben was not isolated in our class; quite the opposite was true. I really believe the children learned from his reports because I tried to link them to their units, just on a higher level. He completed several independent research projects on subjects he would enjoy because of his love of science and medicine. When we studied Hawaii, he studied leprosy and the leper colony in the Hawaiian islands. During our Alaskan unit, Ben's research at the library was on the aurora borealis. After his report, the children eagerly identified pictures they found based on his given information. When Ben shadowed a surgeon, he wrote and displayed his findings about the harm various sized bullets would cause. The surgeon came from L.A. and had written much about the subject. Ben, a target shooter himself, found this fascinating. When Ben shared his display with the class, it gave them insight into Ben as a unique, multi-talented peer.

A quick overview test of our second-grade Math program plus classroom observations showed me that, except for "regrouping," Ben had already attained the skills that I'd teach that year. It was evident that minimal teaching would be necessary for Ben to attain these additional skills. Even our team's Challenge Math program, used to broaden the knowledge of top second graders, was not going to be enough. To Ben, it was "cinchy"!

Ben's parents and I felt that placement in a third-grade classroom for Math made the best use of his time and mine. A willing third-grade teacher agreed to have him join her class. He caught on to the mathematical functions he hadn't been introduced to before and became one of her top students. Ben looked forward to going each day and eagerly shared his work with me. Computation was slow at first, but gained strength with a little

practice. Even the homework became part of the routine and was done without a struggle. Remembering the various Math times turned out to be the most difficult aspect for us both, but an alarm watch came to the rescue.

In Reading, I encouraged books well above grade level, but of his choosing. Non-fiction was always his first love and I would suggest a balance of biographies and acclaimed fiction as well. He made a television with a moving scroll of pictures and script, painted main ideas from chapters, created dioramas, story trees, author mobiles, etc. In each case it was always Ben, with my guidance, who established the deadlines. Once set, we could structure his daily goals together. After I realized that we needed to review this daily, he came to understand what I expected of him and neither of us then ended up frustrated. We did need to modify the class schedule since Ben was in his third grade classroom when we were reading and didn't need to participate in our Math. We also tried several locations, looking for a quiet work space. Sometimes the library or a conference room was used. Eventually, Ben became accustomed to working and staying focused on his different tasks just by sitting at another table in our room.

Ben's participation with the fifth graders in "Toastmasters" was especially rewarding for us all. He looked forward to the event each week, even though it met during his lunch time. His love of public speaking was given technique and encouragement. He used what he was taught when he would share with our class his scientific reading, etc. Best of all, our class joined him for his graduation and were especially proud that his fifth-grade "peers" had chosen him to present a speech for the final ceremony. The children knew this was special and showed their pride that Ben was from their room!

Looking back, I know there were times I pushed when I should have been more patient. It was a learning experience for us both. Ben grew to realize that I would always be expecting his best effort on each task...no coasting. I learned to go over the goals before each worktime and not to assume that they were in place from a previous time. Frequent, but informal contact was always kept with Ben's parents. I can't emphasize enough what positive support they were for me. Most of all, Ben and I just enjoyed each other and each new accomplishment we shared together.

Evidence of Growth Commensurate With Ability

Throughout Ben's second-grade year, he performed well and earned excellent grades in his modified program. Are there other indicators, however, that we can use to assess whether his academic progress was appropriate for his level of ability? A benchmark for appropriate growth for gifted students has been adopted by the Colorado State Advisory Committee for the Gifted and Talented (Silverman, 1990). Students should progress at least one year in achievement level during a regular school year. This does not mean that Ben should merely have mastered second-grade work, but that he should have progressed the equivalent of one year in each subject area from the level he had already achieved by the beginning of second grade. Since Ben was given achievement tests during the summer following kindergarten, in April of second grade and April of fourth grade, we can roughly evaluate his progress by comparing grade equivalents. These equate Ben's performance in the major academic areas with the average performance of children at various grade levels. (An equivalent of 10.9 means the 9th month of 10th grade.)

Ben scored at the ceiling level of the PIAT-R in two subtests, suggesting his achievement level to be beyond the limits of the test. His PIAT-R and K-TEA scores are, therefore, only marginally comparable, but the K-TEA brief and long forms are highly correlated. Ben's test scores not only indicate "sufficient" progress by state standards, but the extremely rapid progress possible for highly gifted students. Ben's level of achievement is clearly higher than what he was taught, even with modified curriculum.

PIAT-R 7/16/91, age 6-1		K-TEA Brief Form 4/24/93, age 7-9	K-TEA Long Form 4/25/94, age 8	
		Grade Equivalents		
Math	2.6	10.9	Math Application	11.3
			Math Computation	10.7
Reading	3.2	8.5	Reading Comp >	12.9
			Reading Decoding	10.8
Spelling	2.8	5.2	Spelling	10.9

Do we know that he was challenged in the classroom? In a survey of parents of gifted students, Ben's parents highly supported their son's modified programming. They felt the individualized plan addressed his strengths and interests. While they believed Ben would have benefited

from the option to learn third-grade math at a faster pace (he felt he was moving too slowly several months after joining the third-grade math class), they were pleased with his progress and believed his attitude toward school and motivation to work had improved. Lin Greene had made a conscientious effort to eliminate assignments covering material he already knew and to replace them with relevant enrichment or accelerated work. He learned to work harder because his teacher's expectations required effort to satisfy. A special relationship had developed with this teacher as a result.

Ben's level of achievement in the spring of second grade caused his teacher to suggest that he skip third grade and attend fourth grade in the fall. Ben's parents decided to support acceleration, if Ben agreed, knowing that he would not easily "fit in" at any grade level. He had always preferred older friends and had no close buddies in second grade. His social development could best be enhanced by contact with other children with similar interests and concerns, not necessarily children his own age. The choice to accelerate him was based upon concern that he would either lose his motivation for learning if restricted to third grade work or present too great a challenge for the teacher attempting to modify his curriculum. Based upon research that grade acceleration usually produces a positive result if the child concurs with the placement, Ben was allowed to make the final decision. After careful consideration, Ben agreed and a plan was devised to promote him to fourth grade. The plan included an option to return to third grade if he wished after the first month in school. Lin Greene contributed afternoon recesses teaching Ben cursive, and third-grade teachers provided books on Colorado history for him to read during the summer (part of the third-grade curriculum).

Fourth Grade

From the beginning of fourth grade, Ben appeared to be well placed and comfortable with a supportive new teacher, Jane Blakemore. His cursive was initially slow, but increased rapidly. His teacher made it clear that he could print when trying to complete spelling tests or other assignments quickly. A fourth-grade math diagnostic test was given to the class and Ben earned the highest score. He was placed in an accelerated fourth-grade math group, which included basic concepts of Algebra and Geometry. Since he had been studying advanced spelling words in second grade, his teacher agreed to have him study a Challenge Word list (Zaner-Bloser, 1984) each week, with the addition of any words he missed on the regular class pretest. His teacher noted that his sense of humor was a good fit in her class and he interacted well with others. She assigned him a seat close to two other boys with similar interests so that friendships could develop. Of Ben's fourth grade placement, Jane Blakemore (Personal communication, November, 1993) wrote:

After having spent a whole quarter with Ben, I'm positive that deciding to have him skip a grade was the right decision. He gets along well with his peers. I can tell he really feels like a part of our "classroom family." He seems to be challenged by the work and has done quite well in all subject areas. He even has time for three enrichment classes (French, advanced geography, and a writing class).

A negative aspect of Ben's placement emerged near the end of the year when a few students began calling him names such as "multi-media encyclopedia" and "dictionary." Jane Blakemore felt the problem emerged because Ben "speaks like an adult" and might have been worse if he had not been accelerated. She and Lin Greene, who had maintained her supportive relationship with Ben, concluded that he would be better placed in a school for the gifted.

Conclusion

Ben would benefit from placement in a self-contained program or school for the gifted where he would probably function at the top of his class. The faster paced instruction at greater depth would more nearly meet his needs, although he would require an individualized educational plan and possible grade acceleration even in the gifted school environment. In the heterogeneous classroom, grade and subject acceleration will probably be necessary at several points in Ben's education, and frequent pacing difficulties will be likely even after acceleration. As Ben grows older, he will become more divergent in ability from his age peers, and his needs will be more difficult to meet. A self-contained gifted program can enhance social development by providing peers with similar interests and a more accepting environment in which to develop social skills. Ben would be less likely to feel "different" and withdraw from others who consider him to be "weird."

Where these options are not available, however, due to inadequate funding or district philosophy, relevant individualization of curriculum within the heterogeneous classroom can help to preserve motivation and love of learning. A teacher must be resourceful, flexible, and appreciative of the special needs of the gifted. The challenge lies in providing sufficient modification to avoid placing a gifted child "at risk," while still meeting the needs of all students in large, diverse classes.

(Continued on page 17)

IN SEARCH OF SERENDIPITY

Creative Ventures And Encounters

Jerry Flack

Tour Guide

Art Museums to Go

Today's fine picture books are portable art museums that stimulate, delight, and challenge young minds. With each new year, the sophistication, quality and creativity manifested in picture books increases. A trip to the local library can be a creative endeavor and a rewarding experience for young travelers and their parents and teachers. One way to facilitate creative interaction between youth and the wonderful picture books available to them is through a guided study of the works of a dynamic and creative illustrator. One of my personal favorites is Peter Catalanotto.

Catalanotto has illustrated many outstanding picture books by authors such as Cynthia Rylant and George Ella Lyon. He has also illustrated three of his own stories, the delightful *Dylan's Day Out*, *Mr. Mumble*, and a Christmas story, *Christmas Always*.

Catalanotto's work reveals a stunning array of emotions, locales and environments. Flexibility and originality are among his many strengths. For SuAnn Kiser's charming *The Catspring Somersault Flying One-handed Flip Flop*, Catalanotto conjures up all the ebullient charm and interdependent joy one might find on a family farm shared by a mother and father and their 12 children. Alternately, Catalanotto portrays one man's isolation and loneliness in the heart of a big city with delicate poignancy in Cynthia Rylant's *An Angel for Solomon Singer*.

The importance of mentors for gifted young artists is beautifully evoked in Catalanotto's first picture book, *All I See*. This touching story reveals much about the vision of artists and their sources of creative inspiration.

The ethereal quality of Peter Catalanotto's art is found in three books by George Ella Lyon which explore the expansion of time. *Cecil's Story* probes a young boy's experience of waiting for his father to return from the Civil War. In *Who Came Down that Road?*, a young boy asks his mother about others that have traveled the dirt pathway they stroll daily. In page after page, the artist brings Lyon's answer to magical fruition. Grandparents, Civil War soldiers, pioneers, Indians, buffalo, mastodons, woolly mammoths, and even seas traveled the same route. Catalanotto and Lyon team again in *Dreamplace* to tell a similarly magical tale about life at Mesa Verde as it is for today's visitors and as it might have been hundreds of years ago for the Anasazi people.

Catalanotto illustrates his own writing in *Dylan's Day Out*, a witty adventure story about a Dalmatian dog named Dylan who leaves his master's drab kitchen and encounters a colorful world populated with some other remarkable black and white inhabitants. *Mr. Mumble* is equally creative and joyful. Mr. Mumble is everyone's favorite uncle, and his tale represents a humorous lesson on the value of good enunciation. He goes shopping for a dozen bagels, a pound of pears, a can of stew, and an alarm clock. However, because he mumbles so much, he returns home with a dozing beagle, a panda bear, a kangaroo, and an aardvark.

Enjoying Peter Catalanotto's art need not be a passive experience. The creative productive thinking functions

(Continued on page 17)

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ART MUSEUMS TO GO Continued from page 16

of fluency, flexibility, originality and elaboration may be strengthened as young people explore and enjoy his superb art. Before reading *Dylan's Day Out*, ask young people to brainstorm all the black and white objects and living things they can as a fluency exercise. Encourage students to think flexibly, too. Can they imagine other "dream places" Mr. Catalanotto might visit and illustrate besides Mesa Verde? (Perhaps Gettysburg or Lexington and Concord?) Encourage young people to create original picture books celebrating personal accomplishments and magic moments in their own lives just as "Willy" Carper's accomplishment is honored in *The Catspring Somersault Flying One-handed Flip Flop.* Creative students may also use elaboration to continue the adventures of Mr. Mumble. Invite them to extend the list of items Mr. Mumble might have on his shopping list. What "mix-ups" might occur with the items they have added to his list?

Through the magical art of Peter Catalanotto, today's creative youth can experience fun on a family farm, the special relationship between an artist and a young boy, and prehistoric America by traveling no further than their local library. Peter Catalanotto's work is truly an imagination celebration and offers many creative experiences.

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Gifted children usually have gifted parents. If you are wondering about your own giftedness, subscribe to *Advanced Development: A Journal on Adult Giftedness.* No other journal focuses specifically on gifted adults. Unlike the traditional view of adult giftedness as high levels of productivity and creativity, advanced development in adults is defined as the deepening of the personality and strengthening of human values such as empathy, concern for others, responsibility and integrity.

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Mary Lynn Baum

from parent to parent

Susan Carson's school district was once a leader in services for gifted children. Recently, however, much of that special programming has been dismantled; the district has adopted a full-inclusion philosophy that aims to serve all children within a mainstreamed regular classroom.

Susan now represents parents of gifted children on the district's "inclusive schools committee." Her experiences during the past year reveal the hostility those who question this movement can encounter. *The committee had been operating for eight months before our association even found out about it—the administration knew of our reservations and tried to shut us out of the process. So our first hurdle was to persuade the school board that we should have a voice on the committee.*

The committee was in the final stages of drafting a questionnaire to be distributed throughout the school system to parents, teachers and principals. Although the newly-appointed representatives had asked specifically to have input into the survey and had serious questions about its design, the committee proceeded hastily with distribution.

Susan elaborates, *The questionnaire began with a definition of inclusion that stated, 'All students belong in neighbourhood schools, where they participate with age-appropriate peers.' The questions that followed related primarily to how inclusion was being implemented in a school, not to the fundamental concerns parents and educators might have about the concept of inclusion.*

A brief section at the end did solicit comments about the impact of inclusion and the concerns of respondents. The responses were very interesting. Many parents and teachers had serious questions about how well children's educational needs were being met. I helped prepare a thorough analysis of those responses...only to have the committee throw out all our work! Where we found an overwhelming number of negative responses, those who wrote the report played statistical games to minimize the results.

The committee's final report is yet to be presented. Although she regards both the survey and the process as suspect, Susan feels there have been victories in other, more subtle ways. *We did find allies on the committee. Some, like representatives of the learning disabilities association, are prepared, as we are, to keep raising questions about the potential removal of all special services. Other allies, who work within the school system and had to be more circumspect within the committee, have recently been promoted and are now in a better position to influence future policy.*

Moreover, because we raised issues but maintained our integrity, those at the top are having trouble dismissing us. Despite attempts to marginalize us, we have been shown to be reasonable people. I still fear that the proponents of full-inclusion could gain strength and all special needs classes and programming could be eradicated, but right now I believe there are enough of us to keep the worst from happening.

Mary Lynn Baum, is past president of the Gifted Children's Association of British Columbia, Canada, Editor since 1983 of its newsletter ***Bright Connections***, and the parent of a highly gifted teenager.

CREATIVITY AND ATTENTION DEFICIT DISORDER Continued from page 3

development of intellectual and creative strengths provides the most hope for effective work with these children.

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ANTENNA . . . .

Current Developments in Gifted Education

A simple jingle floated around in the early days of the gifted education advocacy movement:

When we have the wheat all sifted
And we know which are the gifted.
Shall we then accelerate?
Or segregate? Or integrate?
How best are the gifted lifted?
(Source unknown, circa early 1970's)

Our educational jargon has become more sophisticated, but we still have not answered the questions: *How best are the gifted lifted?* And is there one better way to teach **all** gifted students?

We've tried out many methods over the years: separate classes, pull-out programs, acceleration, enrichment, regular classrooms, mainstreaming and most recently inclusion. We've learned that gifted children are as different from each other as they are from the rest of the student population. So even after 20-plus years of research, we have not been able to agree upon one educational approach that can successfully meet all those diverse needs.

In the midst of all the confusing theories and analysis, two concepts have a critical and positive impact on gifted kids: **communication** and **flexibility**. To figure out what works best for each child, parents, teachers and other school personnel must sit down together, talking and listening to each other. Whatever programming options they choose need not be cast in stone. There must be built-in flexibility so that, if the initial plan (which may have sounded perfect on paper) doesn't work, they can all go back to square one and start over with a different approach—or combine the best of several approaches.

How best are the gifted lifted? I can't respond in rhyme, but my best answer is: If it works, do it! If a method challenges a child, and is practical in terms of time and money, implement it—or at least give it a try.

Dorothy Knopper, M.A., is a private consultant for gifted education in Colorado, author of *Parent Education: Parents as Partners*, and publisher of *Understanding Our Gifted*.

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